

GARDEN NOTES

WRENNOOK

It all commenced in the early seventies when my first wife and I were bits of “hippies” and wanted to live on some land. (It was an era in society where there was a large move by the young people to break away from the traditional lifestyle of their parents and society. We were looking for an alternative lifestyle, living from the land and being self-sufficient, however we wanted to integrate nature with self-sufficiency living!

We commenced looking for land in the Latrobe Valley, we found a piece of land in what we believed to be the “wilderness” on a dirt road called Blowfly Road. We were one of the last houses on the road, about 8 km from Churchill. Our block was cheaper than the rest as it was still mainly bush, which is what we wanted and were looking for. So, we got working on developing and building a modest home. By this time our first child was born and it wasn’t long before number two was on the way. With families in the area all having young children it wasn’t long till we started developing part of the property into a children’s playground, with rope bridges, flying fox, a mud brick cubby and a fort for the boys. There were also the usual animals that appealed to children. Later an indoor swimming pool was added, while the neighbours built a tennis court and other things appealing to children as they were similar in age to ours and shared their equipment.

As was common practice at the time when bush areas were deemed to be cleared for logging or fire wood our property was logged at some stage. You can still see the remains of the loading ramp, a sling that was used for this process and “no longer” the remains of the broken beer bottles on the property.

With the development of the university in Churchill more areas opened up and it wasn’t long before we had sealed roads and our property is now only 4km from Churchill and on Thomson Rd.

As the children grew up and started to leave home, it was at that time that my wife died and I became more seriously involved in developing the garden, having had an open garden with the local church, to raise money for special projects. To fill in the time, being on my own, I completed an arts degree at the Churchill campus and thus the added art on the property.

Unfortunately, in 2009 my property was devastated in the bushfire that raged through this area and destroyed all the garden and outbuildings. I was lucky it did not affect the house. Some of the more mature plantings closer to the house have since recovered.

I have subsequently met a new partner, who is a joint inspiration in developing the garden as it is today. An interest in sustainable living has seen the development of fruit trees, a vegetable garden and many ornamental plants. Near the tank stand in the courtyard, you’ll find two highly producing avocado trees with espaliered plums behind. Opposite these is a productive vegetable garden. Heading towards the house is a persimmon tree tucked into an ornamental garden. This is flanked by an herb garden.

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Moving north past the house you pass through a citrus orchard. At the bottom of that is a deciduous ornamental grove with a wet weather creek flowing through it. Behind that is a children's play area and mountain paw paws line the path leading up to an impressive wisteria arbour. On the adjoining fence line is a row of ornamental pears alongside a cherry, fig and mulberry.

Over the wooden bridge, across the sweeping lawn you pass a grove of camellias and rhododendrons leading to a shade house behind which is an Australian bottle tree, and a range of berry bushes. To the left is an enclosed orchard.

Opposite the shade house is a gate to a path on the south side of the dam that leads to the hobbit hole. The path extends up the hill meandering through the bush to a picnic area.

We are very happy to share our garden with other garden enthusiasts.

Wrennook is located on the lands of the Gunaikurnai people. Open Gardens Victoria wish to acknowledge the Traditional custodians and we pay respect to their Elders, past, present and emerging.

**These notes can be downloaded from the Open Gardens Victoria website:
www.opengardensvictoria.org.au**